

Book Review

How to Design and Teach a Hybrid Course: Achieving Student-Centered Learning through Blended Classroom, Online and Experiential Activities

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Citation: Caulfield, J. (2011). *How to Design and Teach a Hybrid Course: Achieving Student-Centered Learning through Blended Classroom, Online and Experiential Activities*. Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing. ISBN: 9781579224226

Publisher Description: This practical handbook for designing and teaching hybrid or blended courses focuses on outcomes-based practice. It reflects the author's experience of having taught over 70 hybrid courses, and having worked for three years in the Learning Technology Center at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, a center that is recognized as a leader in the field of hybrid course design.

Jay Caulfield defines hybrid courses as ones where not only is face time replaced to varying degrees by online learning, but also by experiential learning that takes place in the community or within an organization with or without the presence of a teacher; and as a pedagogy that places the primary responsibility of learning on the learner, with the teacher's primary role being to create opportunities and environments that foster independent and collaborative student learning.

Starting with a brief review of the relevant theory – such as andragogy, inquiry-based learning, experiential learning and theories that specifically relate to distance education – she addresses the practicalities of planning a hybrid course, taking into account class characteristics such as size, demographics, subject matter, learning outcomes, and time available. She offers criteria for determining the appropriate mix of face-to-face, online, and experiential components for a course, and guidance on creating social presence online.

The section on designing and teaching in the hybrid environment covers such key elements as promoting and managing discussion, using small groups, creating opportunities for student feedback, and ensuring that students' learning expectations are met.

A concluding section of interviews with students and teachers offers a rich vein of tips and ideas.

How to Design and Teach a Hybrid Course: Achieving Student-Centered Learning through Blended Classroom, Online and Experiential Activities by Jay Caulfield offers a summary of effective pedagogy one can apply to any classroom, and proposes practical design tips for teachers of hybrid courses.

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Effective teachers often find themselves redesigning curriculum, researching new pedagogical approaches, and seeking refreshing changes to their courses. This helpful text provides an introduction to the hybrid model, teaching pedagogy, and designing a hybrid course. The book also highlights interview data about hybrid learning, teaching, and best practices. Caulfield concludes with actual interview data from hybrid course students and teachers, which is a clever way to investigate both sides of the hybrid experience.

The language of this book is directly aimed at teachers. Jay Caulfield succinctly explains hybrid learning and teaching, compares pedagogy styles and learning theories with a focus on experiential learning, and she compares traditional teaching to hybrid teaching. The book includes useful charts and samples of key components for visual learners. Caulfield dedicates two entire chapters to hybrid course learning strategies: discussion, and small group. In each chapter, Caulfield clearly previews information to be covered, gives information, provides examples, and ends by summarizes the information. The text is broken up into small, easily digestible, one-to-two paragraph sections. The book is absolutely accessible and not written solely for the tech savvy expert as one might expect. This text is applicable to all teachers.

From this book, teachers can expect to learn:

- The concept of hybrid learning and teaching;
- Skills and ideas for effectively creating hybrid learning experiences; and
- Data-driven justification for hybrid teaching and learning.

This text would be most useful as a resource to consider when preparing or redesigning a course, whether it be online, hybrid, or face-to-face. Teacher training programs could also recommend this book to their students because of the survey of pedagogical styles. Reading this book with time to reflect on each chapter is thought provoking as there are opportunities for practical application throughout. Caulfield seems to genuinely want to share her depth of knowledge and experience. The final reflection reveals her intentions with this book: “what I’ve written is, in essence, a reflection and culmination of my life experiences as a learner and a teacher.” Her years of teaching and curriculum design experience are humbly reflected in this practical text.